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LETTERS

ON THE

BRITISH MUSEUM.



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LETTERS

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LETTER I.

SIR,

THE regret you lately expreſſed on being obliged to leave town without ſeeing the Britiſh Muſeum, has induced me to write you ſome account of

it, in a ſhort ſeries of letters, which I ſhall tranſmit from time to time; and if they afford you the ſmalleſt amuſement, ſhall be happy in this, as in every other opportunity of obliging a perſon, whoſe goodneſs and taſte merits ſo much the love and eſteem of all his acquaintance.

The ſtately edifice in which that noble collection of rarities is depoſited, was built by the Duke of Montague. It has many large and magnificent apartments, which are ſeverally occupied by antiquities, natural curioſities, and animals.

There are likewiſe five valuable libraries; thoſe of Sir Hans Sloane and Dr. Mead; the manuſcripts late the property of the Earl of Oxford and Sir Robert Cotton, called the Harleian and Cotton collec-

collections; and the Royal Library, conſiſting of books and manuſcripts, preſented by his late Majeſty.—At the inſtitution of this great treaſury of learning, it was propoſed that a competent part of 1800 l. the annual ſum granted by Parliament for the ſupport of the houſe, ſhould be appropriated for the purchaſing of new books: but I have been informed, that the ſalaries, together with the contingent expences, which it was impoſſible to aſcertain with any exactneſs at firſt, have hitherto always exceeded the allowance: ſo that, inſtead of having any thing reſerved for the benefit of the library, the managers have been obliged to make annual application to Parliament for a ſubſidy to defray the neceſſary charges. I could wiſh to ſee this remedied, as the general advantage reſulting from a public

library, muſt lay the higheſt claim to the conſideration of a wiſe Legiſlature. The whole œconomy of the Muſeum is conducted by the beſt regulations; which indeed are neceſſary to preſerve order, where the public curioſity is ſo much concerned. Certain gentlemen are appointed to each department, whoſe buſineſs is to attend the company. There is alſo a large room for the accommodation of thoſe who are inclined to ſtudy, called the Reading-room. Admiſſion to this apartment is procured by applying to the truſtees, who meet once a fortnight. The tickets for a ſight of the Muſeum are to be had of the porter. The number of perſons admitted at a time, is limited to fifteen, and their ſtay in the houſe, to two hours.

Tho'

Tho' the firſt viſit I made to the Muſeum afforded me the greateſt pleaſure, I cannot remain ſatisfied till I have ranged thro' the vaſt collection of manuſcripts, where perhaps I may find ſomething not unworthy of your attention. For this purpoſe I have got admiſſion to the reading-room; and ſhall alſo ſend you an account of what is moſt remarkable amongſt the other curioſities, as ſoon as poſſible.

LETTER II.

SIR,

ON entering the gate of the Muſeum, I obſerved under the piazza's two pieces of greeniſh marble, which belonged to the mauſoleum of Cleopatra. They were lately ſent from Egypt by Mr. Montague, to the Earl of Bute, together with four mummies and a large crocodile. His Lordſhip preſented them to the King, who was pleaſed to beſtow them on the Muſeum. Theſe ſtones are about four feet high, and three and an half broad. Both ſides are covered with hieroglyphics, repreſenting human hands and feet, a hawk, a ſerpent, &c. The cornices have been decorated with ſculpture, which is now much effaced.

The

The mauſoleum of Cleopatra ſtood near the city of Alexandria. It was the ſame in which ſhe had depoſited the body of Anthony, and where ſhe herſelf was likewiſe interred, in conſequence of her requeſt to Octavius Cæſar, immediately before her death. This ſtructure was begun in her own life-time, and completed by the order of Cæſar. That it was very grand, we have the teſtimony of hiſtorians, and Martial alludes to it in the following beautiful epigram.

De vipera electro incluſa.

Flentibus Heliadum ramis dum vipera ſerpit,
Fluxit in obſtantem ſuccina gemma feram.
Quæ dum miratur pingui ſe rore teneri,
Concreto riguit vincta repente gelu.

Ne tibi regali placeas, Cleopatra, ſepulchro,
Vipera ſi tumulo nobiliore jacet.

Mart. Epig. lib. 4. Ep. 46.

which I have tranſlated thus :

While from th' Heliades's weeping boughs
The limpid amber on a viper flows,
The reptile wond'ring feels the fluid bind,
And in the frozen gem is cloſe confin'd.
Why, Cleopatra, your mauſoleum prize,
If in a nobler tomb a viper lies ?

There is no female character in hiſtory which claims ſo much admiration as that of the unfortunate Cleopatra. Her beauty was exquiſite ; her wit was equal to her beauty ; and there was ſuch a natural grace and ſweetneſs in every thing ſhe ſaid or did, as captivated all who converſed with her. The ſound of her voice

was

was ſo melodious, that it gave inexpreſſible pleaſure to all who heard her ſpeak; and her tongue, like an inſtrument of many ſtrings, had a vaſt compaſs and variety of ſound. An uncommon application had improved their natural talents, and rendered their influence almoſt univerſal. She ſpoke moſt languages with readineſs, and there were but few of the barbarous nations whom ſhe anſwered by an interpreter. To moſt of them ſhe gave audience herſelf; to the Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes, Parthians, and many others. With theſe accompliſhments ſhe poſſeſſed many of the moſt ſplendid virtues. Her magnanimity was great; her magnificence unequalled. She was liberal, and a lover of learning. If too great a ſenſibility of pleaſure ſubjected her to the dominion

of

of the ſofter paſſions, ſhe diſplayed however ſuch conſtancy in all her attachments as would have done honour to the moſt virtuous affection. The motive to her death was the ſame which has been admired in Cato; and the manner of it more ſuitable to female ſoftneſs and decency, than that of the rigid Lucretia. You will think I might have ſpared you the trouble of this panegyric; but I could not let ſlip this opportunity of doing juſtice to ſuch extraordinary merit. And had not the poets in the court of Auguſtus been ſwayed by prejudice or reſerve, we might have ſeen dedicated to her memory, a monument more laſting than that of marble.

LETTER III.

SIR,

IT is ſomewhat extraordinary, that after giving you an account, in my laſt, of two marbles which are valuable for their antiquity, I ſhould now write you of human bodies more antient by upwards of a thouſand years. Would not the greateſt part of mankind be apt to queſtion my veracity, were I to affirm, that I have really ſeen ſeveral perſons, who, if they did not precede the age of Solomon, have at leaſt been his cotemporaries? They probably might think that I myſelf deſerved the firſt rank among the antiquities. And indeed, if the doctrine of the antient Egyptians concerning the tranſmigration of the ſoul, was not now exploded, I

cannot

cannot ſee why I might not claim as good a title to even the oldeſt of theſe relics, as Euphorbus pretended to have had to the body of Homer. But, without further preamble, I ſhall begin my deſcription of the mummies.

Two of theſe bodies are of a middle ſtature; the third ſeems to be the body of a child of ſeven or eight years old; and the other of an infant. They are painted with hieroglyphical figures, and were preſerved in caſes made of the ſycamore-tree, a ſort of wood as durable as themſelves. Near them are ſeveral of the birds Ibis, embalmed in earthen pots, and likewiſe two ſmall boxes, in which are the feet of other mummies. I imagined at firſt, that they contained the tools belonging to the employments which the

two

two largeſt mummies might have profeſſed, as ſuch have been frequently found in the catacombs. But theſe people having no appendages of that ſort, and being taken out of the pyramids, the moſt honourable places of interment, it is probable they have been perſons of diſtinction. But they are poſſeſſed of a more ſolid claim to veneration, than either rank or antiquity can beſtow; having paſſed that ſolemn and impartial trial after death, from which even thoſe of the higheſt quality in Egypt were not exempted, by which their actions and characters were fully canvaſſed, and approved, before they could be allowed interment.

Indeed there is reaſon to think, that this ſcrutiny was not carried with ſo much rigour into the private ſcenes of life, as in the more public ſteps of conduct, which might

might affect the welfare of the community.

I was extremely deſirous of knowing in what ſtate human bodies could exiſt for ſo many ages; and being informed that a mummy had been lately diſſected, I inquired into the particulars, and received the following account from a gentleman who attended at the diſſection.

The body was wrapped up in three or four folds of linen; the outer fillets adhering together by means of a gummy ſubſtance, and the inner by pitch. Theſe formed in all a covering about half an inch thick. On opening the head, the inſide was found to be lined with pitch, which had been poured into it through a hole in the under part of the ſkull,

called by anatomiſts the *foramen occipitale*. Many of the teeth were entire, and the hair ſtill remained on the eye-brows. The ribs were black and very brittle, hardly to be diſtinguiſhed from the pitch. The bones of the thighs and legs were likewiſe black, and contained ſome pitch in their cavities. The ſkin on the ſoles of the feet, with part of a bulbous root which was found underneath them, remained entire; as did likewiſe the nails of the toes and fingers. As the linen ſtuck to the bones of the legs in ſeveral places, it was imagined the body had been reduced to a ſkeleton before it was embalmed. This mummy had ſuffered ſo much from the injuries of time, that ſeveral nails had been driven into it to keep it together. In others which have been formerly diſſected, both here and abroad,

abroad, ſome muſcular parts have been found; but we are told, that, on being touched with the fingers, they crumbled into duſt. 'Tis not improbable, that all which have yet been opened were ſuch as had been moſt damaged. The art of embalming among the antient Egyptians has been very imperfectly tranſmitted by hiſtorians. Indeed, this is more a matter of curioſity than uſe. However, from the blackneſs of the bones, and pitchy ſubſtance found within them, it would ſeem to have conſiſted in boiling the body in pitch, after having embowelled it, and extracted the brains through the noſe, as Herodotus informs us.

The practice of embalming was originally founded on the opinion, that, after a certain number of years, the ſoul ſhould

ſhould be re-united to the body. Whether ſuch practice could really have any influence on the morals of the Egyptians, by keeping in remembrance the virtues of their anceſtors, as ſome have imagined, is not ſo eaſy to determine. Perhaps we have attributed to that cuſtom an effect, which proceeded only from the principle on which the cuſtom was founded. 'Tis probable, that the greateſt advantage which the ſtate derived from its dead, was in relation to commerce. For, by a law of Aſychis, it was enacted, that no perſon ſhould borrow money without pawning the body of his anceſtor, which it was reckoned the greateſt infamy not to redeem. But, whatever effect it might have had on the virtue of individuals, I am inclined to think, that, from the eſteem in which it was held, the cuſtom of em-

balming muſt, upon the whole, have had a very pernicious influence on their national courage. For they would not readily expoſe their bodies to danger, who were ſo ambitious of preſerving them as entire as poſſible, till the time they expected the reſurrection. And in fact we find, that never any people were ſo often, or ſo eaſily conquered, as the Egyptians. They regarded the dwellings of the living as inns, which were intended to accommodate them for a ſhort ſpace of time only, while they called the manſions of the dead their houſes, which they were to poſſeſs for a long revolution of ages; and provided they enjoyed the ſecurity of the latter, they were little diſpoſed to defend the former.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

AFTER having viewed the mummies, I began to examine the idols of the Egyptians. The firſt I obſerved was a baſs-relief, in black ſtone, of Oſiris or Serapis, with the little god Horus before him; and on each ſide hieroglyphical figures; one of which reſembles a ſerpent, and another a locuſt. There are beſides ſeveral maimed ſtatues of the ſame deity in white ſtone; as alſo a great many ſmall brazen images of Iſis. One of theſe is creſted with a ſerpent; another wears a crown of towers, like that of the goddeſs Cybele; another is ſitting, with a Horus on her knee. There are other figures of Horus; one with a purſe in his hand; another with a rod in

one hand, and a pair of compaſſes in the other. In a third image he bears in his hand a croſs, and in a fourth, he carries the croſs upon his head. I obſerved a great many brazen figures of Anubis. He is ſhaped like a man, with the head of a dog. There are other heads of that animal cut in ſtone, and placed upon hollow cylinders. What next drew my attention, was a head of Jupiter Ammon, in alto relievo, of a bluiſh marble. He makes an odd figure with the rams horns; but the workmanſhip is fine. There is a beautiful image of a cow in a lying poſture, cut in ſtone; and another of that animal in braſs. Theſe are probably idols of Apis, the god of Memphis. There is alſo an image of a lion in ſtone; the deity which was worſhipped at Lentopolis: and another of the famous

Sphinx,

Sphinx, which ſo much puzzled the antients to explain. It is a white ſtone, about two feet and a half long. It is now generally ſuppoſed, that this figure was made uſe of, to ſignify the overflowing of the Nile, which happens in the months of July and Auguſt, when the ſun is in the conſtellations of Leo and Virgo: for which reaſon it was compoſed of the head and neck of a woman, and the body of a lion. This inſtance affords the greateſt reaſon to believe, that a great part, if not the whole mythology of the Egyptians, was ænigmatical, and that it muſt have been originally owing to a wrong interpretation of their antient ſymbols, that ever they degenerated into ſo groſs and amazing an idolatry. I next obſerved the Siſtrum, a muſical inſtrument they made uſe of at their ſacrifices; and with which Virgil makes

Cleopatra aſſemble her troops at the battle of Actium.

Regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina ſiſtro,

The beauteous queen, amidſt the dire alarms,
With her loud ſiſtrum calls her troops to arms.

This inſtrument is an iron hoop of an oval form, about four inches long: through which run three moveable croſs bars of the ſame metal. It has a wooden handle: ſomewhat reſembles a grid-iron; and makes a rattling noiſe on being ſhaken.

Near the Egyptian antiquities are placed ſeveral Chineſe and Japoneſe images. They are all of the human form, but in very odd attitudes. One is ſtanding upon a frog: another ſeems walking upon crutches; and ſome appear in praying poſtures, with laughing faces. Theſe figures

figures are moſtly coloured, and might have ſerved either as idols or ornaments. But as we know little of the cuſtoms of theſe nations, we cannot determine with certainty.

LETTER V.

SIR,

THE next in order are the antiquities of Hetruria. I could find in this collection only two images. They are figures of men; and one of them has upon his head, the ſame ſerpent which I formerly obſerved on an image of Iſis. But of the deities which were peculiar to Hetruria, we know little more than the names. Theſe antiquities conſiſt moſtly of earthen veſſels of various forms. One is of a large ſize, like a ſoup-diſh, with Tuſcan characters: and another, which is a ſepulchral urn, is covered with ſculpture in alto relievo. Upon the top is the figure of a man in a reclining poſture, of admirable workmanſhip.

The

The Hetrurians derived their origin from the remoteſt antiquity; but it is generally allowed that they were a colony from Lydia.

——— *Lydia quondam*
Gens bello præclara jugis inſedit Etruſcis. VIRG.

———Of old, a Lydian band,
Renown'd in war, fix'd in the Tuſcan land.

'Tis certain they flouriſhed in Italy before the Trojan war. Many antient hiſtorians bear teſtimony to the fame of this people. Diodorus Siculus calls them φιλοτεχνοι, *lovers of the Arts*; and we are told by Heraclides Ponticus, that Homer made a viſit to their country, in conſequence of the reputation in which they were held. They were no leſs renowned for arms than for arts. And it was not till almoſt five hundred

dred years after the building of Rome, that the whole power of the Romans could overthrow them. They were much addicted to ſuperſtition and divination; though their religious records are now loſt. But the loſs of theſe writings deſerves little to be regretted, in compariſon of the more valuable monuments of their political conſtitution, and the famous book on the Tuſcan laws, written by Ariſtotle. We need no further evidence of both their civil and military virtues, than that it was by adopting the Tuſcan cuſtoms, and by the continual exerciſe of arms in the wars which they maintained againſt the Romans, that the latter became qualified to attain the ſummit of grandeur, to which they at laſt arrived. As the people of Hetruria conteſted for antiquity with thoſe of Egypt, their learn-

learning has alſo ſhared the ſame fate with the hieroglyphics of that nation; for the language and characters of the Hetrurians are now no more underſtood.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

I HAVE now got among the antiquities of thoſe parts of Greece and Italy, where all the polite arts were carried to the higheſt perfection. But the ſtop I made in Hetruria, has greatly weakened the contraſt, which I expected would have been ſtronger, had I paſſed immediately from the Nile to the Tyber. From a land where a deity was repreſented with the head of a dog; where a lion was the moſt reſpectable inhabitant of one city, and an ox of another; from a people immerſed in myſtery, to Rome and Athens, where wit and elegance reſided; the cities of heroes and demi-gods. But I am ſorry to acquaint you that the collection

lection of theſe antiquities is far ſhort of what I hoped to find. Among them, however, there is of braſs, a noble buſt of Homer. It is of the moſt exquiſite Greek ſculpture; and is ſaid to have been found near Conſtantinople. Of the leſſer ſort, is an image of the Venus de Medicis, and another of the ſame goddeſs ſupported on her left knee, and embracing a Cupid. It is finely proportioned, and has all that beauty and eaſy gracefulneſs, which we admire in the works of the Grecian artiſts. There is another Cupid with a bow in his left hand, and an image of Bacchus with a great belly, and a cap upon his head. There is alſo the Eſculapius of Epidaurus, holding a ſerpent in his right hand, and a globe in his left. Near this, is an image of Jupiter,

ter, bearing a ſhield on his left arm, in his right hand a thunderbolt.—

——— *Arcades ipſum*
Credunt ſe vidiſſe Jovem, cum ſæpe nigrantem
Ægida concuteret dextra, nimboſque cieret.

VIRGIL.

Oft our Arcadians deem, their wondering eyes
Have ſeen great Jove, dread ſovereign of the ſkies,
High o'er their heads the god his ægis held,
And blacken'd heav'n with clouds, and ſhook th' immortal ſhield.

PITT'S VIRG.

Laſtly a buſt of Silenus. Theſe are all of braſs. There are beſides of braſs, the figures of a horſe, a mouſe, a frog, a human foot, and two hands. Some of theſe have perhaps been enſigns of the *manipuli*.

Next is a collection of ſmall earthen

bottles or lachrymal urns, reſembling the glaſſes which are uſed for holding perfumed waters The cuſtom of preſerving tears was very common amongſt the antients, but has probably been diſcredited, by the extravagant height to which it was carried by hypocritical and affected mourners.

Of all the remains of antiquity, no kind is more plentiful than the lamps. There are a great many here, of various forms, and very elegant workmanſhip, beſides vaſes, inſtruments of ſacrifice, &c. &c. &c.

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LETTER VII.

SIR,

AFTER I had ſurveyed the memorials of antiquity, I fell into a reflection on the fate of empires, and the viciſſitude of all human things. When the Egyptians, ſo much celebrated in hiſtory for their learning, and many virtues, knew not how to maintain their government beyond the ſpace of a few centuries; when the Hetrurians, with all their boaſted divination, could not prevent the ruin which overwhelmed them; and when the Romans, who reduced the known world to their ſubjection, were themſelves at laſt enſlaved by a few of their own citizens; have we not reaſon to conclude, that there is a determined dura-

tion to the grandeur of every kingdom upon earth? Muſt then the fatal period arrive, when even the glorious conſtitution of Britain ſhall be ſapped by the force of corruption? O would ſhe remember for ever, that it is the valour of a people, and the virtue of their rulers, which alone can elevate, or ſupport a nation, in a ſtate of proſperity and independence! But to turn our thoughts to ſomething more animating, I ſhall preſent you with a ſhort Latin poem, which I found yeſterday among the manuſcripts. It was written by John Seward, in the time of Henry the Vth, who conquered Charles VI. of France.

Ite per extremam Tanain, pigroſque Triones,
Ite per arentem Lybiam, ſuperate calores
Solis, & arcanos Nili deprendite fontes,
Herculeumque ſinum, Bacchi tranſcurrite metas;

Angli juris erit quicquid complectitur orbis.
Anglis rubra dabunt prætioſas æquora conchas,
Indus ebur, ramos Panchaia, vellera Seres,
Dum viget Henricus, dum noſter vivit Achilles.
Eſt etenim laudes longe tranſgreſſus avitas.

Go, where the ſtreams of utmoſt Tanais roll,
Where endleſs winter reigns around the pole;
Go, where the ſands of ſcorched Lybia glow,
And hidden ſources of the Nilus flow:
In glorious conqueſt, preſs beyond the bounds,
Where Fame the deeds of ancient heroes ſounds:
To England's empire ſhall the nations bend,
Far as the limits of the world extend.
To her the ſea, on Egypt's eaſtern ſhores,
Shall pay the tribute of its pearly ſtores,
Arabia ſpices, India ivory, yield,
And Cathay, golden fleeces from each field;
While Henry lives, while our Achilles' name
Shines forth tranſcendent in the liſt of fame.

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

THE next ſtep in my progreſs brought me among the natural curioſities. Air, earth, and ocean, have been ſearched to furniſh theſe apartments, which contain an almoſt endleſs variety of the modifications of matter. How ſhall I deſcribe them? Foſſils of a thouſand kinds, minerals, metals, pebbles, cryſtals, precious ſtones, of various colours and ſplendor, ſhells of ten thouſand different forms, compoſe a collection of aſtoniſhing beauty and magnificence.

Here alſo are innumerable inſects. But as a minute deſcription of theſe might afford ſubject for many volumes, I ſhall

only inform you of a few of the moſt remarkable productions. Being at this time more inquiſitive after ſuch objects as amuſe the eye, than thoſe that gratify the underſtanding, I firſt viewed the precious ſtones. Among theſe is a pearl of the fineſt water, of an oval figure, and about twice the bigneſs of a coffee-bean. It is reckoned not inferior to that for which her Majeſty gave 500 guineas. There is a large amethyſt, the fineſt in England. Several cups of agate; one of which is very remarkable, and of great value. The bottom of it is of the hæmatitis, the middle of jaſper, and the upper part agate. It may contain about half a pint. Near it ſtands a curious cabinet of amber.

I paſſed from theſe to the ſhells. Of

this claſs there are ſeveral, which, both for ſhape and colour, are of admirable beauty. For one ſmall ſhell, remarkable only for its ſcarcity, Sir Hans Sloane gave 85 guineas.

Amongſt the inſects are two large and beautiful butterflies; one of a tranſparent blue, the other brown, with a green ſpot upon each wing. I muſt not forget an Egyptian pebble, which has been broke by accident, and diſcovers on both pieces, a lively picture of the poet Chaucer; and a piece of marble, the veins of which repreſent a delightful landſcape. Theſe are the moſt remarkable of the *luſus naturæ* I have ever ſeen.

LETTER IX.

SIR,

I Believe the rarities mentioned in my laſt, might have engaged my attention the whole time I was in that apartment, had not a rambling curioſity, more than any philoſophical motive, carried me to other objects. I obſerved ſome birds neſts; one which is ſhaped like a chymiſt's retort: the tube through which the bird aſcends to the neſt, being above a foot long. It was brought from Peru. The Eaſt-India thruſh's neſt very much reſembles the former. There are ſeveral of them joined together. The length of the paſſages to theſe neſts, are neceſſary to preſerve them from the ſquirrels, which are very deſtructive to birds

in

in that country. Theſe extraordinary inſtances of the ſagacity of birds, in accommodating the ſtructure of their neſts to the exigency of their ſituation, would ſeem to put the inſtinct by which they are actuated, almoſt upon a level with human reaſon. There is another neſt, of an American bird, made of a tobacco-leaf, the edges of which are ſtitched together with graſs. Likewiſe the neſt of a ſpider formed of clay, and covered with a lid, which moves upon a hinge, and which the ſpider faſtens with his web, when he goes out.

Amongſt many curious petrifactions, are the ſkeletons of fiſhes included in ſtone; a human ſkull, ſhells, &c. I obſerved ſeveral pieces of the ſtone called Aſbeſtos, with ſome cloth made of it.

This ſtone is found in conſiderable quantities in the north highlands of Scotland, and is the ſame with the Amianthus, which the antients uſed for their ſhrines, and is ſaid not to conſume by burning. They procured it from Corſica and other iſlands.

LETTER X.

SIR,

AFTER leaving the natural curioſities, I arrived in the animal kingdom. Moſt of the animals have each a ſeparate vial proportioned to their ſize, in which they are preſerved with ſpirits. What firſt attracted my notice, was the Opoſſum from America. It is remarkable for a pocket about the middle of its belly, in which it nouriſhes its young. It is ſaid, that when they are brought forth, they are no larger than flies, and that they enter immediately into this pocket, where they remain ſucking the breaſts, which are within it, until they are able to go abroad: tho', for ſome time after, they have recourſe to this receptacle, for ſucking,

ſucking, ſleeping, and ſecurity from danger. By means of the muſcles which compoſe the under part of this pocket, the animal ſhuts and opens it at pleaſure. She poſſeſſes ſurpriſing ſtrength and agility; for from the branch of a tree, on which ſhe hangs by the tail, an artifice ſhe practiſes to catch birds, ſhe can throw herſelf a great way, from one branch to another, with her young in her pocket. The opoſſum is ſhaped like a ſmall fox: its tail about a foot long, and covered with ſcales from near the root.

Proceeding a little further, I diſcovered the Surinam male-Toad. When the female has depoſited the ſpawn, he receives it on his back and nouriſhes it. But he is ſo unſightly a creature, that I ſoon left him, and went to the Salamander.

This

This is a ſpecies of the lizard, and was formerly ſaid to reſiſt the force of fire. Even Ariſtotle, who perhaps had adopted the fable implicitly, on the authority of antient poets, affirmed that the Salamander was ſo far from being affected by fire, that fire was extinguiſhed by its coldneſs. There was indeed ſome foundation for ſuch an opinion: for the ſkin of this animal is covered with a great many little veſicles, containing a watery liquor, which is forced out by the application of fire. But if the experiment be continued longer, the Salamander muſt periſh.

LETTER XI.

SIR,

THE laſt article in my former letter, afforded a remarkable inſtance of the fiction in which natural hiſtory has been ſo long involved; and from which all the diligence of later philoſophers has not been able entirely to extricate it. Nor is it ſurprizing that more fable has been mixed with the accounts of venomous creatures than of others; ſince they are generally avoided, and produced in countries where knowledge is little cultivated. From this principle only, we can account for the many fictitious animals of this nature, which never exiſted but in the imaginations of mankind.

I ſhall

I ſhall now give you a ſhort account of the moſt remarkable of the ſerpent-kind, that are really to be met with, and of thoſe that are in the Muſeum.

The flying ſerpent is of a greyiſh colour, ſhaped like a lizard, with large white wings. It is reported to be exceedingly venomous; and ſeems to be the ſame kind, of which, Herodotus tells us, many were carried yearly into Egypt by the winds, and which the prophet threatened ſhould be ſent amongſt the children of Iſrael. It is about ſix inches long.

On looking for the Aſpis, I found two of them together; as if they had been ſo placed to expreſs the ſtrong mutual affection which was attributed of old to the male

male and female of this kind of ſerpent. They are about two feet long, of a pearl colour. The bite of the aſpis is ſaid to cauſe an eaſy death, which was, no doubt, the reaſon why Cleopatra preferred it.—Lucan mentions this ſerpent in the ſtory of Lævus, one of Cato's followers, who periſhed by the bite of it, in the deſerts of Africa.

At tibi, Læve miſer, fixus præcordia preſſit
Niliaca ſerpente cruor: nulloque dolore
Teſtatus morſus, ſubita caligine mortem
Accipis, & Stygias ſomno deſcendis ad umbras.

Bit by an aſp th' unhappy Lævus dies,
His blood congeals, thick darkneſs veils his eyes.
No ſenſe of pain, no torment did he know,
But ſunk in ſlumbers to the ſhades below.

The next to be found here, is the Rattleſnake. It is about two feet long, mottled

mottled black-and-white. The rattle at its tail is about five inches: compoſed of ſeveral cartilaginous rings, joined together by a membrane; the rings diminiſhing gradually in ſize, to the point. When the rattle is put in motion, it makes a conſiderable noiſe.

The hooded ſnake, ſo called from two ſhoulder-like protuberances behind his head, is ſomewhat larger than the aſpis; and is one of the moſt virulent of the ſerpent kind, his bite cauſing almoſt immediate death.

The Ceraſtes is of a browniſh colour, about the length of the former, and has upon his head two excreſcences reſembling horns. In Shaw's Travels we have a very ſtrange account of two of theſe

ſerpents, which he ſaw in the cuſtody of an Italian apothecary at Grand Cairo. They were kept in a bottle, where they remained five years, without any other food than a little ſand, in which they coiled themſelves.

The Hæmorrhois is of a darkiſh colour, about a foot long, not tapering towards the tail, but his body all of an equal thickneſs. His bite is ſaid to occaſion a mortal bleeding.

We have a fine account of an event of this kind in Lucan, where he celebrates the unhappy fate of young Tullus, an adventurer in the army of Cato.

Impreſſit dentes Hæmorrhois aſpera Tullo,
Magnanimo juveni, miratorique Catonis.
Utque ſolet pariter totis ſe offendere ſignis

Corycii

Corycii preſſura croci : ſic omnia membra
Emiſere ſimul rutilum pro ſanguine virus.
Sanguis erant lachrymæ, quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab iis largus manat cruor, ora redundant,
Et patulæ nares : ſudor rubet : omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis : totum eſt pro vulnere corpus.

Th' Hœmorrhois fix'd her teeth with poiſon fir'd,
On Tullus brave, who Cato's worth admir'd:
And as the ſaffron which Corycians ſteep,
When ſqueezed, yields a ruddy tincture deep ;
So the red blood, at once from ev'ry part,
Ran mixt with poiſon down, and drain'd the heart.
Blood falls for tears, and o'er his mournful face,
The crimſon drops their tainted paſſage trace.
Where-e'er the liquid juices find a way,
There ſtreams of blood, there crimſon currents ſtray.
His mouth and guſhing noſtrils pour a flood ;
And ev'n the pores ooze out the trickling blood.
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd ;
And the whole body ſeems one bleeding wound.

Beſides theſe, there are many other ſerpents of a harmleſs nature, which I for-

bear to mention. I muſt however inform you of the ſkins of two, which are remarkably large; one is twenty, and the other fifty feet long. And I have been told by a perſon of unqueſtionable veracity, that he has ſeen one which meaſured ſeventy-two feet, and about a foot and half in thickneſs. This renders the ſtory not improbable, of that huge ſerpent which moleſted the Roman army, on the banks of the river Bagrada. How happy are we, that theſe terrible animals, which are the peſts of other countries, are, in Britain, only to be found in the Muſeum!

LET-

LETTER XII.

SIR,

THE ſubject of my laſt letter reminding me of an opinion which has much prevailed amongſt mankind, that ſerpents were affected by faſcination; I thought it might not be improper to inquire on what authority ſuch a belief could be founded. We meet with ſo many different kinds of this art in antient authors, that it would be tedious to repeat them. I ſhall therefore only take notice of that which is moſt celebrated, and called Enchantment, or faſcination by ſinging. The poets afford innumerable inſtances of this kind of magic.

Vipereo generi, & graviter ſpirantibus hydris,
Spargere qui ſomnos cantuque, manuque, ſolebat. VIR.

His powerful charms, ev'n ſnakes in peace could keep,
And lull the envom'd vipers race to ſleep.

Ad quorum cantus ſerpens oblita veneni,
Ad quorum cantus mites jacuere ceraſtæ.

SILIUS ITALICUS.

Lull'd with whoſe ſongs, the ſnake forgot its prey;
Tam'd with whoſe ſongs, the wild Ceraſtes lay.

The power of this enchantment was believed ſo irreſiſtible, that ſerpents were made to burſt, and even their heads to fly off by it.

Frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis. VIRG.

The frigid ſnake in fens is burſt by ſong.

Caputque Marſâ deſilire nœniâ. HORAT.

Off drops the head, by force of Marſian ſong.

The profeſſion of magic was in antient times very profitable, and there could be no

no better method to obtain a reputation in this art, than by pretending a ſupernatural influence over ſerpents. Two circumſtances, which very much favoured this impoſture, were, that they ſuppoſed the ſerpents whoſe poiſon was moſt virulent, to be ſometimes above the power of enchantment. And if they ſhewed no ſigns of being affected by ſinging, it was concluded that they had ſhut their ears.

The power of producing any ſurpriſing effect from a natural cauſe, diſcovered perhaps by accident, and kept ſecret from the people, was ſufficient, with the addition of a few myſterious words or ceremonies, to paſs for preternatural endowments. Even not many ages ago, Fryar

Bacon, on account of his ſuperior knowledge in natural philoſophy, incurred the imputation of ſorcery. It would however be too bold to deny that ſerpents can in ſome degree be charmed by muſic; ſuch a ſenſibility being often obſerved in other animals. And Mr. Shaw tells us of ſeveral *worrals*, a ſpecies of lizard, which he had ſeen dance to muſic. Nay, I have been credibly informed, that, at Calcutta, in the Eaſt-Indies, it is common to carry about Serpents, which are taught to dance to muſic or ſinging. It is therefore not improbable that many of theſe animals have been induſtriouſly tamed by thoſe who pretended to the art of enchantment, in order to delude the people. And I am of opinion, that the famous ſerpent which went from the temple of Eſculapius, in a ſhip to Rome, to cure the

city

city of a plague, had been for ſome time a pupil of the prieſts of that deity. Nor ſhall I ever believe that the ſerpents which the Bacchanalians twiſted round their hair, and threw upon each others breaſt, for the admiration of the multitude, were any other than the moſt harmleſs of the kind; though Horace, in his odes to Bacchus, would inſinuate the contrary.

Tu ſeparatis uvidus in jugis
Nodo cœrces viperino
Biſtonidum ſine fraude crines.

And o'er the pathleſs mountain's height,
Her head with horrid ſnakes enroll'd,
Which harmleſs writhe their angry fold,
Thy raptur'd prieſteſs ſpeeds her flight.

FRANCIS'S HORACE.

Dulce periculum eſt,
O Lencœe, ſequi Deum
Cingentem viridi tempora pampino.

The

The venturous theme my ſoul alarms,
But warm'd by thee the thought of danger charms.
When vine crown'd Bacchus leads the way,
What can his daring votaries diſmay?

FRAN. HORACE.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

SIR,

THO' I intended to devote this letter to the Crocodile, I would by no means be underſtood to pay him any ſort of worſhip. Nor ſhould I care to approach him while alive, even in ſuch an emergency as happened to Menes, one of the antient kings of Egypt, who, when he was purſued by his own dogs to the lake Mæris, leaped upon the back of that animal, which carried him ſafely to the other ſide. But whatever fiction may have attributed to the crocodile, we are certain that the people of Arſinoe in Egypt inſtituted divine honours to him. The Crocodile in the Muſeum meaſures twenty feet in length. He has two large teeth at the

the extremity of his lower jaw, which run into two holes in the upper, fitted to receive them.

Crocodiles are very frequent in the Philippine iſlands, where the inhabitants, in order to deſtroy them, wade into the rivers armed with daggers, and batons of iron pointed at both ends. The crocodile, on obſerving them, advances with open mouth; when one of the perſons, thruſting in his left arm, with the baton, prevents the jaw from falling, for the uppermoſt only is moveable, and with his dagger ſtabs it in the neck and belly, the only parts which are vulnerable; the reſt of its body being covered with a hard cruſt like armour. This animal is of the oviparous kind, and buries its eggs in the ſand, where they remain about ſix weeks, when it

it again digs up the ſand, in order to extricate its young; ſome of which are often killed in the operation.

Theſe animals would increaſe prodigiouſly in Egypt, was it not for the activity of the Ichneumon, which deſtroys their eggs. You know how much that little creature has been celebrated for its courage; but as perhaps you have never ſeen a poem on that ſubject, written by Opianus, a Greek phyſician, I have here inſerted a tranſlation of it for your amuſement.

Small is th' Ichneumon, yet its fame extends,
For mighty deeds, to earth's remoteſt ends.
The greateſt monſter, bred where Nilus flows
In his ſev'n ſtreams, It craftily o'erthrows.
For when the Crocodile, with ſleep oppreſt,
Stretches his weary limbs and turns to reſt;

His

His ſnouted mouth, and jaws immenſe, unbound,
A throat diſcloſing of a hideous round;
The ſly Ichneumon, wondrous in its art,
Each motion views attentively, apart;
Till his huge ſides It ſees in heavings riſe,
And lockt in ſleep th' enormous monſter lies.
Then from the mud, in rapid courſe It bends,
And boldly down the dreadful throat deſcends.
Now rous'd from ſleep, and pierc'd with inward pain,
The raging monſter ſeeks the wat'ry plain;
And now the ſlime, and now the deep explores,
Now reſtleſs rolls him on the ſandy ſhores:
To furious rage his fervid anguiſh fires,
And his foul mouth hot clouds of ſmoke expires.
The glad Ichneumon, maſter of the prize,
Unmov'd beholds the mortal fury riſe:
While in his entrails fixt, It probes around,
Tears ev'ry nerve, and feeds in ev'ry wound;
Till ſated with the carnage and the gore,
It leaves the corpſe extended on the ſhore.
O highly for ſuch enterprize renown'd!
What words, Ichneumon, can thy deeds reſound?
What ſtrains thy intrepidity relate,
Who bravely ventur'd in the jaws of fate?

LETTER XIV.

SIR,

AMONGST the birds in the Muſeum, I obſerved none ſo remarkable as the bird of Paradiſe. It reſembles a ſwallow in the ſhape and ſize of its body. The head is of a cheſnut colour, with a little white upon the forepart. The back, wings, and tail are of a ſhining yellow. Its plumage is inimitably fine. It has a very long tail, and two or three long feathers growing from its ſides, which turn towards each other at the extremities, near the point of the tail; but whether they are of any uſe to the bird, naturaliſts are at a loſs to determine. It was formerly believed that the bird of Paradiſe was perpetually flying, that it fed on air, and never

never lighted on the earth until dead; but this opinion ſeems to have been founded on ignorance, which always produces the moſt extravagant notions of things.

I had now finiſhed my review of the animals, and nothing remained but to take a ſlight obſervation of their appendages.

The horns of the African goat reſemble thoſe of a cow, in colour and ſmoothneſs. They turn outwards in a ſpiral manner, diverging between two and three feet at the points. The large horns of the Rain-deer of Lapland are likewiſe placed here, beſides many more; but how diminutive appear thoſe of every other animal, when compared with the ſtupendous horns of the American mooſe-deer!—The horn of the unicorn fiſh is about

about five feet long, perfectly ſtraight, and tapers in a ſpiral manner to the point, like that which is often ſeen in repreſentations of the fabulous unicorn.—I cannot help remarking, that in this whole magazine, which contains no ſmall part of what is moſt curious and extraordinary in the creation, I have obſerved only two or three inſtances, in which nature has deviated from her ordinary courſe. One is of a horn, which is ſaid to have been cut from the head of a woman. There hangs in the ſame apartment the picture of one Mary Davies of Cheſhire, from whoſe head likewiſe, two ſuch horns had been frequently amputated.

You might have expected ſome account of the medals, of which there is a great collection: But the time is too inconſider-

able for a ſubject, which requires ſuch accurate obſervation; and there is only a ſmall part of them as yet exhibited. I ſhall therefore, in my next letter, acquaint you of what is moſt remarkable in the libraries: and afterwards proceed to the manuſcripts.

LET-

LETTER XV.

SIR,

IN the royal library is the moſt antient manuſcript of the Old and New Teſtament that is extant. It is written in Greek, on parchment, and called the Alexandrine manuſcript, from the place where it was found. This valuable piece of antiquity was ſent in the year 1628, to King Charles I. a preſent from Cyrillus Lucaris, then patriarch of Conſtantinople. An account of it is written in Latin, at the beginning of the 1ſt vol. by the donor, importing that it was the work of Thecla, an Egyptian lady of quality, who lived about the time of the council of Nice. The words of Cyrillus are as follow.

 "Liber

" Liber eſt Scripturæ ſacræ N. & V. " Teſtamenti, prout traditione habemus; " eſt ſcriptus manu Theclæ, nobilis fe- " minæ Ægyptiæ, ante mille & trecentos " annos circiter, paulo poſt Concilium " Nicenum. Nomen Theclæ in fine " libri erat exaratum : ſed extincto Chri- " ſtianiſmo in Ægypto, a Mahometanis, " & libri una Chriſtianorum in ſimilem " ſunt reducti conditionem ; extinctum " ergo eſt Theclæ nomen, & laceratum : " ſed memoria & traditio recens obſer- " vat."

It is probable this manuſcript was written before the year 396 ; for, except the Evangeliſts, none of the books of ths New Teſtament are divided into chapters, that cuſtom not having been introduced till the above period.

We

We may therefore conclude theſe manuſcripts to be about 1400 years old. The goſpel according to Matthew is moſtly wanting.

There are alſo in the libraries, two manuſcript copies of the Pentateuch in Hebrew; one of which is pretty old. It is written in a large character, on brown African parchment.

Likewiſe Queen Elizabeth's prayer book, with ſome notes in her own handwriting; and the maſs book of Mary her predeceſſor. This laſt, like many other books in theſe libraries, is ſplendidly illuminated with coloured pictures and gilding.

Among the moſt valuable manuſcripts

in this collection, is the famous Magna Charta of King John. It is written on a large roll of parchment; but as if it had ſuffered violence amidſt the heats and diſtraction of oppoſite parties, which laboured to maintain or deſtroy it, ſome pieces are wanting. There is however a correct copy of it kept in the ſame box.

The Magna Charta of Henry III. and the Pope's bull abſolving that king from the oath and engagements he had entered into with his nobles. As the form of this Abſolution is ſomewhat curious, I have annexed a tranſlation of it.

" Alexander, Biſhop, ſervant of the ſervants of God, to our dearly beloved ſon in Chriſt, the illuſtrious King of England, health and bleſſing.

" It hath come to our hearing, that ſome time ago, preſſed by the importunity of your nobles and people, to obſerve certain ſtatutes and ordinances, which they, under the pretext of reforming the ſtate of the ſaid kingdom, have made in your name; you bound yourſelf by oath, to the diminution of your power, and the leſſening your royal prerogative. We therefore, from a regard for your honour, and out of the fulneſs of our apoſtolical power and authority, do abſolve you from the ſaid oath. Nevertheleſs it is our will, that this abſolution ſhall not be extended to ſuch ſtatutes and ordinances as reſpect the good and advantage of the Eccleſiaſtics and church of your kingdom. For in theſe we will not ſuffer the ſmalleſt violation of your oath. Let none there-

fore dare to infringe or contradict this abſolution; but if any ſhould preſume to attempt ſo doing, let him know, that he ſhall incur the indignation of the almighty God, and of the bleſſed apoſtles Peter and Paul."

"Given at the Lateran, the ſeventh year of our pontificate. April 7. 1262."

LET-

LETTER XVI.

SIR,

ON my admiſſion to the reading-room, I began to examine the catalogues of the manuſcripts, that I might be able to determine in what manner I ſhould proſecute my reſearches. I found they contained either papers relating to the tranſactions of government, memoirs of families, or miſcellaneous collections, of which the greateſt part is of poetry. Amuſement being my chief object, I reſtricted myſelf to the laſt of theſe articles.

The journal of Edward VI. is a pretty thick folio, written by himſelf. In the beginning of it, are inſerted ſeveral original

letters from this Prince to King Henry VIII. his father, the Queen his mother, and to the Duke of Somerſet; ſome of which are in Latin, and ſome in Engliſh. There is alſo an original letter from the Queen to the young Prince, in Latin; but the many corrections in this ſhort epiſtle ſhew, that her majeſty had not then acquired the accompliſhment of writing that language with facility. The memoirs of Edward commence in his ninth year, and are continued till his ſixteenth, in which he died. I have extracted the following articles.

1550.

May 2. 'Jhon Bocher, otherwiſe call-
'ed Jhon of Kent, was burnt
'for holding, that Chriſt was not
'incarnat of the Virgin Mary,
'be-

'being condemned the yeare be-
'fore, but kept in hope of con-
'verſion; and the 30th of April
'the biſhop of London and the
'biſhop of Elie were to perſuade
'her. But ſhe withſtood them,
'and reviled the preacher that
'preached at her death.

'The biſhop of Cheſter before
'a vehement affirmer of Tran-
'ſubſtantiation did preach againſt
'it at Weſtminſter, in the preach-
'ing place."

This Prince has left us a more diſtinct account of the ſweating ſickneſs, the ſecond time it appeared in England, than is perhaps to be met with in any phyſical author of thoſe times.

July

July. 'For if one took cold, he died
'within three hours; and if he eſcap-
'ed, it held him but nine hours, or
'ten at the moſt. If he ſlept the firſt
'ſix hours, as he ſhould be very
'deſirous to do, then he raved, and
'ſhould die raving.

11. 'It grewe ſo much; for in Lon-
'don the 10th day there died 70 in
'the liberties, and this day 120."

This young Prince had given uncommon application to ſtudy; for I find in his journal ſeveral tracts on ſubjects of the moſt important kind, which are treated with a maturity of judgment uncommon at his years.

I found a copy of verſes written by King

King James I. on the death of his Queen, which in caſe you have never ſeen, I ſhall here tranſcribe. I was at a loſs to conceive the meaning of the firſt line, till reading a poem by another author on the ſame ſubject, I found that a comet had appeared a little before the Queen's death.

Thee to invite the great God ſent his ſtar,
Whoſe friends and kinſmen mighty princes are:
For tho' they run the race of men and die,
Death ſerves but to refine their majeſtie.
So did my Queen her court from here remove,
And left the earth to be enthron'd above.
Thus ſhe is chang'd, not dead; no good prince dies,
But like the day-ſtar only ſets to riſe.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

SIR,

AS I was ſearching amongſt the manuſcripts, I lighted accidentally on an old phyſical volume, which treated of amulets, enchantments, and love-potions. The time I ſpent in running over this whimſical performance, having interrupted the proſecution of my poetical diſcoveries, I ſhall give you in this letter, a ſhort account of the various revolutions in opinion, which have happened in the profeſſion of phyſic. I am afraid I have choſen a very improper ſubject for your entertainment; but as it expoſes a ſeries of very ridiculous and extravagant notions, I hope it will afford you at leaſt ſome ſmall ſatisfaction.

In

In the ſixteenth century, when the reputation of amulets, enchantments, and the like, began to decline among the people, a new theory was introduced, which might lay the foundation of ſuch practice in phyſic, as would be apparently more ſolid, and amuſe mankind with a ſhew of learning and philoſophy. This doctrine was that of fermentation, begun in the head of Sylvius a profeſſor of medicine at Paris.

In order to propagate his ſyſtem the more effectually, he ſupported it with ſuch ſpecious arguments as his ingenuity could invent. And phyſiological reaſoning being then but little known in the profeſſion, his ſtrongeſt proofs were drawn from analogy only. He inſiſted that all

diſ-

diſeaſes proceeded from a fermentation, which was the means made uſe of by nature, to throw off whatever is injurious to the conſtitution. That it was with the humours of the human body, as with thoſe of a political government, which, on any extraordinary emergency, are thrown into violent agitations. That the truth of this opinion needed no other confirmation than that, by ſuch a proceſs chiefly, every liquor is purified.

Theſe ſentiments were ſo conformable to the manner of thinking which prevailed at that time, and ſo ſeaſonable for the exigencies of the faculty, which was evidently falling into contempt, that they were immediately adopted. The youth from every quarter now flocked to Paris, to be inſtructed how to excite and regulate

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an inteſtine motion in the fluids of their patients. In this way they fermented for near a hundred years, when Bellini, an Italian phyſician, endeavoured to introduce into phyſic, the uſe of mathematical knowledge.

He taught, that as the human body was a machine, conſiſting of ſolids and fluids, its œconomy and diſeaſes ought both to be inveſtigated by the principles of mechanics. But a theory, which depended ſo much upon experiment, and which muſt have ſubjected its profeſſors to the rigid laws of ſcience, could not be tolerated by an order of men, who had always been accuſtomed to the utmoſt licentiouſneſs of opinion. They determined therefore to oppoſe this innovation; and for that purpoſe a ſpirit was called

called up to their aſſiſtance. Their notions were now ſo much refined and ſubtilized, that not content with accounting for diſeaſes, by the action of air upon the fluids, it was maintained that they were produced by an intelligent agent within us, who preſided over the œconomy of the body, and directed its operations. The author of this opinion was Dr. Stahl. He had no doubt taken the hint from Van Helmont, who, about a century before, aſſerted the exiſtence of an Archeus, or little inviſible being, which conducted the digeſtion of our food, and had its reſidence in the ſtomach.

The extravagant jargon of the faculty now ſurpaſſed all human comprehenſion. And it is probable that the theory they now maintained would have utterly ruined the profeſſion, had not Hoffman invented

vented a new doctrine, or rather only an improvement on the old. He inſiſted, that acute diſeaſes were not produced by an Archeus, or ſpirit, but that they were owing to a ſenſibility of the ſolid parts of the body, which, upon feeling any thing hurtful to the conſtitution, preſently contracted all its fibres, to expel the enemy. It was no hindrance to the ſucceſs of this opinion, that they were not conſcious of any ſuch ſpaſm as the author endeavoured to eſtabliſh. They embraced therefore this new doctrine, and their notions were again contracted within the limits of matter.

Thus was their fluctuating humour reſtrained for ſome time: till Boerhaave, ſeized with the ambition of being eſteemed wiſer than all who had gone before

him, became the author of a freſh innovation. As the ſoul and fibrous parts of the body, had both been occupied by former theoriſts, he reſolved to build his ſyſtem upon the fluids; and to a thickneſs in theſe, he attributed the cauſe of all diſeaſes. At once the ſpaſms univerſally relaxed, and all Europe laboured under diſorders peculiar to the conſtitution of the Dutch.

Since when, the ſyſtem of Boerhaave has been held in great reputation; but, from the preſent diſpoſition of the medical ſocieties, it is highly probable, they will ſoon begin again to ferment.

This ſhort hiſtory of Phyſic exhibits a ſucceſſive revolution of opinions, ſome the moſt abſurd, and all the moſt con-

 tradictory,

tradictory, that could poſſibly be invented by the human mind. And yet upon theſe opinions, and the different practices reſulting from them, the health and lives of mankind depended, and have been determined. The philoſophy of Ariſtotle was never more perverted in the ſchools, than the ſimple laws of nature have been by theſe men, who have probably done more miſchief in the world, than all the other non-naturals put together.

LETTER XVIII.

SIR,

WHEN I was quite weary with purſuing my journey through uncultivated regions of fancy, I ſpied at laſt two lovers ſitting beneath a green ſhade. I was ſo charmed with the melting accents and mutual tenderneſs of this happy pair, that I could not help noting down their dialogue. But to drop my metaphor, and ſpeak in plain terms, I have found among the manuſcripts a a paſtoral poem, which I am hopeful will pleaſe you.

A Paſ-

A Paſtoral DIALOGUE.

CELIA, ELRON.

As Celia reſted in the ſhade,
With Elron by her ſide,
The ſwayne thus courted the young maide,
And thus the nymph reply'd.

ELRON.

Sweet, let thy captive fetters wear,
Made of thine arms and hands;
Till ſuch as thraldom, ſcorn, or feare,
Envy thoſe happy bands.

CELIA.

Then thus my willing arms I winde
About thee, and am ſoe
Thy pris'ner, for myſelf I binde,
Untill I let thee goe.

ELRON.

Happy that ſlave whom the fair foe
Ties in ſo ſoft a chaine.

CELIA.

Farre happier I, but that I know
Thou wilt breake looſe againe.

ELRON.

By thy immortal beauties never!

CELIA.

Frayle as thy love's thine oath.

ELRON.

Tho' beauty fade, my love laſts ever.

CELIA.

Time will deſtroy them both.

ELRON.

I doat not on that ſnow-white ſkinne.

CELIA.

What then?

ELRON.

Thy purer mind.

CELIA.

It lov'd to ſcorn ———

ELRON.

Thou hadſt not beene
So fair, if not ſo kind.

CELIA.

Oh! ſtrange vain fancy.

ELRON.

But yet true.

CELIA.

Prove it.

ELRON.

Then make a brayde
Of thoſe looſe flames that circle you,
My ſunnes, and yet your ſhade.

CELIA.

'Tis done.

ELRON.

Now give it me.

CELIA.

Thus thou
Shalt thine owne error finde:
If theſe were beauties, I am now
Leſſe faire becauſe more kinde.

ELRON.

You ſhall confeſſe you erre, that haire
Shall it not change the hue,
Or leave the golden mountaine bare?

CELIA.

Aye me! it is too true.

ELRON.

But this ſmall wreath ſhall ever ſtay,
In its firſt native prime:

And ſmiling, when the reſt decay,
The triumph ſing of time.

CELIA.

Then let me cut from thy faire grove
One branch, and let that be
An embleme of eternal love:
For ſuch is mine to thee.

ELRON.

Thus we are both redeem'd from time;
I by this grace ———

CELIA.

And I
Shall live in thy immortal ryme,
Untill the muſes dye.

ELRON.

By heav'n! ———

CELIA.

Swear not, if I muſt weepe.
Love ſhall not ſmile at me.

ELRON.

This kiſſe, my heart and thy faith keepe;
Thus breathes my ſoule to thee.

Then forth the thickett Thyrſis ruſht,
Where he ſaw all their play.
The ſwayne ſtood ſtill, and ſmil'd and bluſht:
The nymph fled firſt away.

LETTER XIX.

SIR,

I HAVE hitherto proſecuted my reſearches amongſt the manuſcripts with much leſs ſatisfaction than at firſt I expected to find. After peruſing many volumes, I have been able only to ſelect two ſhort copies of verſes, which are worthy of your attention; the reſt being moſtly trifling; and if their authors ever attempt to amuſe the fancy, it is either by falſe and affected wit, or illiberal ſatire. Many of theſe writings have been compoſed by Monks, who were more inſpired by the ſpirit of devotion, than poetic genius. They generally addreſs themſelves to the Virgin Mary, who

ſeems not to have been propitious to their invocations.

One of the poems I have extracted was compoſed by Sir Walter Raleigh, the morning on which he was executed.

The thought is borrowed from a trite metaphor drawn from human life, expreſſed in the quaint ſtyle, which prevailed in that age. But however affected it may appear, we are certain that if ever real ſorrow can be uttered in poetry, it muſt have been felt on that occaſion.

What is our life? It is a play of paſſion.
What is our mirth? The muſic of diviſion.
Our mothers they the tiring houſes be,
Where we are dreſs'd for time's ſhort tragedy.

Earth

Earth is the ſtage, heav'n ſpectator is,
That doth behold whoe'er doth act amiſs:
The graves that hide us from the parching ſun,
Are as drawn curtains till the play be done.

The laſt poem I ſhall ſend you, is the production of Mr. Francis Bacon, afterwards Viſcount St. Albans, and Lord high Chancellor of England. It ſeems to be an imitation of an ode of Horace.

The man of life upright whoſe guiltleſs heart is free
From all diſhoneſt deeds, and thoughts of vanitie;
The man whoſe ſilent days in harmleſs joys are ſpent,
Whom hopes cannot delude, nor fortune diſcontent;
That man needs neither towers nor armour for defence,
Nor ſecret vaults to flie from thunder's violence.

He

He ſurelie can behold, with unaffrighted eyes,
The horrors of the deep, and terrors of the ſkies.
Thus ſcorning all the care that fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heav'n his book, where wiſdom heav'nly ſings.
Good thoughts his only friends; his life a well-ſpent age:
The earth his ſober inn, a quiet pilgrimage.

FINIS.

LIST OF PORTRAITS

SUSPENDED ON THE WALLS

OF THE

MINERAL GALLERY

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM. 1838.

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1. King Henry VIII. *Presented by Dr. Andrew Gifford, in* 1758.
2. King James I. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
3. Oliver Cromwell. *This Portrait belonged to the old Cottonian Library.*
4. King Edward III.
5. Mary Queen of Scots. } *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
6. King George I. *From the old Cottonian Library.*
7. King Henry VI.
8. Henrietta Maria, Queen of Cha. I. } *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
9. Oliver Cromwell, by Walker. *Bequeathed,* 1784, *by Sir Robert Rich, Bart., to whose great-grandfather, Nathaniel Rich, Esq., then serving as a Colonel of Horse in the Parliament Army, it was presented by Cromwell himself.*
10. Mary Queen of Scots, "æt. 42." *Presented by Lieut. Gen. Thornton.*
11. King James I. *Presented by Mr. Cook.*
12. William Duke of Cumberland, by Morier. *Presented by Lieut. Gen. Thornton.*
13. King William III. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
14. King Richard II. *Presented, in* 1766, *by John Godman, Esq. of the Middle Temple.*
15. James Duke of Monmouth. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
16. Mary Queen of Scots (so named).
17. Queen Elizabeth, by Zucchero. *Presented by the Earl of Macclesfield,* 1760.
18. King George II., whole length, by Shackleton. *Painted for the Trustees.*
19. Margaret Countess of Richmond. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
20. Queen Elizabeth, on pannel. *Presented, by Lord Cardross,* 1765.
21. King Henry V. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
22. King Charles II. by Lely. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
23. Caroline Queen of Geo. II., by Jarvis. *Presented by Lieut. Gen. Thornton.*
24. King Edward VI. *Presented, in* 1768, *by Mrs. Mary Mackmorran.*
25. Rev. Dr. Thomas Birch, painted in 1735. *Bequeathed by himself.*
26. Dr. Andrew Gifford, by Russel. *Bequeathed by himself,* 1784.
27. James, 1st Duke of Chandos, wh. l. *Presented by James Farquharson, Esq.*

28. Humphry Wanley, Librarian to the Earl of Oxford. *Presented by Herbert Westfaling, Esq.*
29. Joseph Planta, Esq., F.R.S., Principal Librarian of the British Museum, from 1799 to 1827. *Presented by the Right Hon. Joseph Planta, G.C.H.*
30. Sir Hans Sloane, half length.
31. Dr. Gowin Knight, 1st Principal Librarian of the British Museum, by Benjn. Wilson.
32. Sir Hans Sloane, wh. l. seated.
33. Claudius James Rich, Esq., born 1787, died at Shiraz, 1821. Resident of the English East India Company at Bagdad from 1808 to 1821, whose Collection of MSS., Medals, and Antiquities is placed in the British Museum. *Presented by his Widow.*
34. Dr. John Ward, of Gresham College. *Presented by Thomas Hollis, Esq.*
35. Dr. Matthew Maty, 2d Principal Librarian of the British Museum. *Bequeathed by himself*, 1776.
36. Sir Hans Sloane, by Murray.
37. Robert Earl of Oxford, by Kneller. *Presented, in* 1768, *by the Duchess Dowager of Portland.*
38. Sir John Cotton. *From the Old Cottonian Library.*
39. Sir Robert Cotton. *Presented, in* 1792, *by Paul Methuen, Esq. of Corsham.*
40. Rt. Hon. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the H. of Commons, wh. l. *Presented by Admiral Onslow.*
41. Sir Robert Cotton. *From the Old Cottonian Library.*
42. Sir Thomas Cotton. *Presented by Mrs. H. M. Bowdler*, 1826.
43. Edward Earl of Oxford, by Dahl. *Presented, in* 1768, *by the Duchess Dowager of Portland.*
44. Rev. Dr. Thomas Birch.
45. Humphrey Wanley. *Presented by the Earl of Leicester.*
46. Peter I., Emperor of Russia. *From the Old Cottonian Library.*
47. Stanislaus Augustus I., K. of Poland.
48. Charles XII. of Sweden.
49. Louis XIV.

Presented by the Rev. A. Planta.

50. An Unknown Head, in ruff and beard; on pannel; "Ætatis suæ 59. 1608."
51. Lord Chancellor Bacon. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
52. John Duke of Marlborough.
53. Andrew Marvel. *Presented by Robert Nettleton, Esq., Gov. of the Russia Company.*
54. Dr. Francis Turner, Bishop of Ely.
55. Admiral Lord Anson. *Presented, in* 1814, *by the Earl of Hardwicke.*
56. Dr. Thomas Burnett. *Bequeathed by Matthew Waters, Esq.* 1788.
57. Archbishop Usher. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
58. Henry Stebbing, D.D. *Presented by his grandson Henry Stebbing, Esq.* 1813.
59. An Unknown Head, a scull in the right hand; on pannel; "Ætatis suæ 24. A° 1569."

60. Sir Henry Spelman. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
61. Geoffrey Chaucer, a small old Portrait on pannel, wh. l.
62. Martin Luther, a small wh. l. on pannel, dated 1546. "Ætatis 63. jaer."
63. Lord Burleigh. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.* On pannel.
64. Sir William Dugdale.
65. Matthew Prior, by Hudson, from an original of Richardson. *Presented by the Earl of Besborough*, 1775.
66. William Camden. On pannel. "Ætatis 58."
67. An Unknown Portrait. In one corner is written "J. Ray." *Bequeathed by Sir William Watson: said to have been painted by Mrs. Beale.*
68. An Unknown Portrait of a Youth, in the dress of the time of Cha. I. believed to be William Courten, Esq.
69. Sir Isaac Newton. *Bequeathed by John Hatsell, Esq. Clerk of the H. of Commons.* 1821.
70. John Speed, the historian. On pannel.
71. Rev. John Ray. *This Portrait belonged to Sir Hans Sloane.*
72. Archbishop Cranmer, by Gerlach Flicke *. *Presented, in* 1766, *by John Michell, Esq. M.P. of Bayfield Hall, Norfolk.*
73. George Buchanan. A small portrait on pannel. "Ætatis 76. Anno 1581."
74. William Shakspeare. *Presented by M. Maty, M.D.*
75. An Unknown Portrait.
76. Voltaire. *Presented by M. Maty, M.D.* 1760.
77. A Portrait (called Cha. I. when Prince). *Presented, in* 1759, *by Mrs. Elizabeth Gambarini.*
78. Vesalius, on pannel, by Sir Antonio More.
79. An Unknown Portrait of the time of Cha. I. believed to be Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange.
80. Anna Maria Schurman, by John Lievens.
81. George, tenth and last Earl Marischal of Scotland. On copper; painted at Rome. *Presented by Lord Glenbervie.*
82. Sir Antonio More. On pannel. *Bequeathed by Dr. A. Gifford.*
83. Pope Clement X.
84. Frederic III., Duke of Saxony, a limning by Lucas Cranach.
85. Moliere. A small Oval.
86. Queen Mary I. of England. *Presented by Sir Thomas Mantel.*
87. P. Corneille. A small Oval.
88. Cosmo de Medici and his Secretary Bartol. Concini. *Brought from the old Cottonian Library.*
89. Jean Rousseau, employed in the Paintings of Montague House. *Presented by Mrs. Wollfryes*, 1757.
90. Franke of Borsalia, Earl of Ostervant, 1470. On pannel.
91. Ulysses Aldrovandus, by Giorgioni. *It belonged to Sir Hans Sloane.*
92. Cardinal Sforza Palavicini, 1663. *Presented by Smart Lethieullier, Esq.*
93. Isabella, Infanta of Spain.

* Gerlach or Gerbertus Fliccius. See Walp. Anecd. of Paint. 4to edit. p. 495.

94. An unknown Portrait of a Gentleman in a ruff and long beard: date 1590. "Ætatis 66."
95. Sir Peter Paul Rubens.
96. St. Evremond. *Presented by M. Maty, M.D.*
97. Henry Frederick, Prince of Orange. *Presented in* 1782 *by Lord Fred. Campbell.*
98. John Gutenberg, the inventor of the art of printing with moveable types. *Presented by Paul Vaillant, Esq.*
99. Robert, Earl of Salisbury. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
100. John Locke, Esq. *Presented by Matthew Maty, M.D.*
101. Alexander Pope, Esq. *Presented by Francis Annesley, Esq.*
102. James Parsons, M.D.
103. Mary Davis, an inhabitant of Saughall in Cheshire, taken 1668, "ætatis 74." At twenty-eight years of age an excrescence grew upon her head, like a wen, which continued 30 years, and then grew into two horns, one of which the profile of the picture represents.
104. Sir John Doderidge. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford.*
105. Sir Henry Vane, Jun. *Presented by Thomas Hollis, Esq.*
106. Richard Baxter. *Presented by Dr. A. Gifford,* 1760.
107. A Small Unknown Head, on pannel, by Dobson.
108. Portrait of a Cardinal, or Pope; small.
109. A Landscape, by Wilson.
110. Unknown.
111. Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, by Ramsay. *Presented by Sir Thomas Robinson, Bart. in* 1777.
112. Lodowick Muggleton. *Presented by a gentleman unknown.*
113. Thomas Britton, the Musical small-coal-man. By Woollaston.
114. Mr. George Vertue, the Engraver. *Presented by his widow,* 1775.
115. Algernon Sidney.
116. John Wallis, D.D., the Mathematician.
117. Governor Herbert, by Devis. *Presented by Admiral Page.*
118. Capt. William Dampier, by Murray. *It belonged to Sir Hans Sloane.*

Henry Ellis.

G. Woodfall, Printer, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.